2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

choice of staying to listen to the villagers ceremonially wail on behalf of the dead Mbuti, or of going off with the rest of the burial party, as soon as the grave was filled, to the wedding. I found it more sensible as well as more congenial to prefer the wedding to the wailing.

These are only a few of the many instances where a choice had to be made, where no middle road was possible even had it been desirable. The result is then necessarily to some extent one-sided, for no matter how I tried to effect a balance by subsequent investigation, I still feel an urgent need to conduct further field work, taking the village standpoint.

Once started on the road, the process of identification was swift, but never complete enough to render it impossible to observe intelligently and with deliberate detachment. Such temporary blindness to other points of view as occurred took some time to wear off, and this was perhaps the major drawback of the technique, and one that should be borne in mind in the more interpretive parts of this work, for it resulted in a number of unasked and therefore unanswered questions.

Integration demanded a number of things, one of which was that I should at all times be as fully mobile as any Mbuti. This cut down the belongings that I could carry with me; a blanket, a single change of clothes, a typewriter, paper and pencils. With a bundle of this size on my back I was able to travel as fast as was necessary whenever the band moved from one camp to another. It meant that I was economically dependent upon the band, however, so some kind of equilibrium had to be reached. I was not successful as a hunter, being too large and clumsy, and I did not carry a gun nor did I wish to acquire food in this way. When within easy reach of the village, then, I would acquire supplies of village foods, such as plantains, beans, rice and peanuts, at the same time that the Mbuti got their supplies. Instead of barter or theft I used currency, but bought only comparable quantities of exactly the same kind of food as the Mbuti. It was then cooked, usually by a youth who acted as general assistant, informant, guide, mentor and censor, but sometimes by myself or by another bachelor, and shared, as was the custom, among any bachelors who were around at the time. As was also the custom, I was adopted by a woman whose husband was away, but who still had his hunting net and sent it out each day with her stepson. She also sometimes cooked for me, and always built my hut, as she did for the rest of her family.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

123 Being a bachelor made my integration into family life somewhat
• 589 easier than it might have been otherwise, and my reciprocal duties were not heavy, mainly involving my working with other bachelors in collecting the saplings and leaves used for making the huts. But being unable to make any great contribution to the food economy, although I participated in the hunt, I found myself pushed into another category that I subsequently discovered to be a perfectly traditional one for incompetent hunters and some others—that of buffoon. This was very convenient, as it meant that I was the recipient of threats, ridicule, jokes and gossip, all of significance, and being made a general scapegoat I was also the center of a number of disputes. I have observed similar buffoons in almost every other hunting band, fulfilling the same function, harmlessly dispelling the many little jealousies and hostilities that arise in everyday camp life.

Later on I acquired a hunting net of my own, by virtue of my proven adult status, and was so able to contribute to the food economy. At this time I was able to watch another bachelor take my place as buffoon.

123 The advantages of this kind of participation are obvious enough, and particularly desirable when a six-foot field worker is living among four-foot pygmies is the way it helps him blend into the social landscape, at least. Among the Mbuti, however, there was an additional advantage. The amount of information I could get from them, even the extent to which I would be allowed to participate, depended upon my attitude to the forest. Fortunately this was something of which I was well aware. But the fact that I was prepared to eat the same food, and that often entirely excluded village plantation foods, and the fact that I was prepared to carry my few belongings myself, to sleep on leaves or branches, and take part in the forest songs that were sung almost nightly around a central fire, conveyed enough of my respect for the forest for the Mbuti to admit me still further.

The process was an interesting one, because it again demonstrated the close relationship between the Mbuti and the forest world around them. But it was also an exhausting and arduous one, and because of the very nature of forest life it was impossible for me to observe all that went on. As will be seen, in the normal course of events a number of different things are going on in different places at different times, and even in the course of the year I cannot be sure that I saw everything of significance. During the *molimo*, for instance, men were expected to stay awake and sing throughout the night until about an

2: Turnbull E-6 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

561 [433] although once again the general pattern in no way implies an invariable rule.

[854] Infants sometimes accompany their mother on her activities, or are left in camp in the charge of youths or elders of either sex.

561 857 Children who do not stay in the *bopi* to play or to imitate adult activities accompany their parents according to sex; however, boys who cannot do much more than walk will, on the hunt, be more likely to accompany their mother. Children up to the age of puberty frequently prepare meals for themselves, not only in the process of "playing house" but also when together as a group. They go together to the streams to fish or crab, to the forest to gather and maybe to hunt for small or slow game, and together they cook and eat these foods. Older children may also co-operate in building a bachelor hut, though more often they will occupy one that has been abandoned, if they want one at all. But even before puberty they are beginning to help on the hunt, the girls with the beating and the boys with guarding the extremities of the nets.

561 883 After puberty the activities of youths are temporarily closer to those of their parents, causing some friction and disaffection, particularly between fathers and sons. The sibling groups, however, are reunited; youths now have activities and responsibilities comparable to those of their older married brothers and sisters. It is the younger married couples and the older youths who are primarily responsible for hunting and gathering, not only for food but also for the other material necessities of life, such as saplings and leaves for the huts, bark for clothing, wood for the fires. It is also this age group that manufactures, without any other form of specialization, the entire limited range of artifacts that constitutes Mbuti material culture.

[443]

561 887 589 The older couples, widows and widowers, retire with regret but without shame or stigma from communal life, and to the end they will act in divers useful ways, in particular looking after children left in the camp while the rest of the band is off on the hunt. Older people also spend a great deal of their time making the twine used in hunting nets, plaiting vine belts and preparing food. They can expect to be fed by the rest of the band, regardless of its kinship composition, and at the same time they are free to undertake whatever individual hunting and gathering they can. The sick or crippled enjoy similar status, being also unable to keep up with the rigors of the hunt. That such people are regarded as a potential danger to society is seen in the legends of old and crippled people who die or who disappear or who

[283]

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In Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

Kengé called out loudly that the only kind of person who would do that was one whose mother's private parts were smelly.

Matungi leapt into the center of the camp and challenged Kengé to a fight. Kengé refused, until called a coward. He and Matungi then each raised one foot against the other, and grappled. At this point the older men intervened and pulled them apart. By then it was time to go hunting, and the incident was forgotten.

14. Two of the most popular people in the band were Moké and Mayuma. The one was a widower, the other a widow. Mayuma wanted desperately to marry Moké, and as fond as he was of her, he equally desperately wanted to remain single. He had reared one family, he said, and had grandchildren, and that was enough. He wanted quiet, and women were noise.

But everyone else thought it would be a good match, and they plotted to help Mayuma. They tried to shame Moké into sleeping with her, at least, by getting her to ask him publicly to do just that. Moké refused.

Shortly afterward Mayuma became ill, and Moké was blamed. It was recalled by Mayuma's kin that after her husband had died, Moké had slept with her and offered her marriage. Now his refusal to fulfill that promise had brought about her illness.

Moké sat and listened, then restated his reasons for not wanting to marry Mayuma, but said that nonetheless he was very fond of her and would help to feed her and make her well. This was accepted, but it was still considered that thwarted love is a very bad thing, and nobody should deliberately mislead another in such matters.

15. Sexual relations between unmarried youngsters are countenanced happily unless they approach the rather hazy realm of incest, or unless they create a disturbance. Parents were constantly complaining of the noise their children made while engaged upon amorous expeditions; they preferred being able to turn a deaf ear. One youth went too far when he called out from inside his girl friend's hut to the group outside (which included her parents), and begged them to continue singing because "it is so sweet to [make love] to song, just like in the *elima* hut." His phrase for lovemaking was somewhat intimately descriptive, and brought cries of protest and his immediate ejection from the hut.

There are numerous other examples where parents become enraged simply at having their attention forced. Manyalibo's daughter, Mebupepé, was courted by all and sundry, and it was not this that

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

him awake with her wailing and would probably forget to cook for him. He set off at once for the village, grumbling, and Moke went with him. Masisi started one of his loud tirades, saying in his sharp voice that Cephu never looked after his children properly, so it was no wonder they died. This must have reminded Kenge of his joke, because he started laughing again, or perhaps he was laughing at Masisi, but Masisi got angrier than ever and said he was going straight to the village to tell Cephu what he thought of him. He stamped angrily after Njobo and Moke, still shouting deprecating remarks about the bereaved father.

Kenge laughed happily and said that there was going to be a dreadful noise when Masisi got back to the village, so we would do better to stay where we were until it was all over. Manyalibo, who had not said a word, suggested looking for *itaba*, a sweet edible root, and with food our foremost thought we set off.

When we got back to the village in the late afternoon we found everyone sitting around outside their little houses, staring gloomily at nothing in particular. Masisi was still talking loudly, pointing at the sky and over in the direction of Cephu's camp, from which I could hear women wailing, and saying that it was a shame that Cephu should let his children die and cause everyone so much trouble. Tungana mournfully said that he didn't like funerals; the Negroes made so much noise at them. Masisi's younger brother, Mambunia, still a bachelor because one of his legs was crippled with paralysis and he was not able to hunt well enough to support a family, added in shrill falsetto that Cephu was so inconsiderate and such a trouble-maker that he would probably let his daughter die completely—completely and absolutely.

I did not understand what he meant at first, but it provoked an immediate response from Asofalinda, Ekianga's widowed sister. She strode across the camp, marching with long swinging strides to where Mambunia was sitting, his paralyzed leg stuck out in front

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

work. Then she took the leaves we had collected and slit the stalks toward the end, like clothespins, hooking two or three of them together. When she had enough she started hanging them on the framework like tiles, overlapping each other and forming a waterproof covering. There were leaves left over when she had finished, so she let other women take them for their houses.

Everyone was working at something, and all were chattering and making fun of the late-comers who had not yet finished leafing their huts, saying how wet they were going to get when the rain came. But I noticed that those who had already finished, like Masamba, even went back to the forest to cut more wood and leaves to help the lazy stragglers who had spent too much time gathering food and eating it on the way in. Sometimes there were as many as four women working on one hut, some hanging leaves from the outside, working upward, others preferring to work from the inside, pushing the leaves through the lattice and working from the top down. Once in a while there was a loud wail as some playful child got in the way and was soundly slapped by his mother.

Just before dusk there was a sudden darkening and a wind swept through the tree tops making leaves and small branches fall to the ground, spinning and fluttering lightly. Then with a sudden hissing sound, loud and ominous, the sky seemed to open and the rain came pouring down. In the villages, the rain comes down so hard that it can almost hurt you, stinging the skin and blowing into the eyes and nose and mouth, but in the forest its fall is broken by the trees and by the time it reaches the ground it has spent its energy.

There were angry shouts from the men as the lightning flashed and the thunder rumbled on and on, and they peered anxiously from the tiny entrances to their huts to see when it was going to end. If it went on too long it would spoil the hunting for tomorrow. My hut was filled with the bachelors, all of whom Kenge had grandly invited in. He explained that they were too old to sleep with their parents

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

and, not being married, had no huts of their own. We had brought our fire into the hut when the rain started, and with the heat of that and of about fifteen bodies I was nearly suffocated. Every now and then the rain found its way through the leaves above and sent a tiny waterfall cascading to the floor. Then someone would stand up and inspect the roof carefully, decide which leaf should be moved, and pushing his fingers through the lattice adjust it. If he moved the wrong leaf it started a leak in another place, bringing howls of annoyance from whoever was beneath. Kenge said it was always like this with a new hut, that was why it was so bad not to be married. If you were married, naturally your wife would get up when it rained at night and fix the roof. But once the leaves had settled down, not even the hardest rain would come in until the leaves got old and dried out and began to curl. Tomorrow, he said, he would cover the roof with dead wood and branches to hold the leaves flat.

The rain lasted only for half an hour, and as soon as it was over everyone came out of the huts. The fires were built up outside again; the women made a few adjustments to the roofs where they had found bad leaks; the men wandered off idly with their bows and arrows to see if they could find a bird or monkey for the evening meal before it was too dark. The huts steamed as they dried out, and a blue haze of smoke hung above the camp and was colored suddenly with orange and gold and red as the clouds parted and the sun on the invisible horizon sent a last blaze of light across the sky. The birds burst into a final chorus of song, and two women argued loudly with each other as to which should have the rest of the leaves that Masamba had cut to help them.

Everyone was tired from the long day's trek and from the flurry of building camp so quickly, and as soon as it was dark and the evening meal had been eaten we all crept into our huts and went to sleep. Kenge, seeing that I was a little concerned, had turned some of the bachelors out, so there were only nine of us. For an hour the

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1968) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

to cook the morning meal. Back in the camp they sat outside their huts, legs straight out in front of them in what seemed the most uncomfortable position possible. From there they prepared the family repast, placing green plantains in the hot ashes to roast, or concocting a stew of mushrooms and chopped leaves with whatever meat was left over from the day before, covering the pot with large leaves to trap the steam and to keep out ashes and dirt. Any little chores that had to be done were done by their daughters, who scurried around collecting dry twigs to heat the fire up more quickly, or sat over the fire with their baby brothers, carefully guarding the pot and making sure it did not upset when the burning wood subsided. The younger women, freed in this way, relaxed and set to work making themselves beautiful. They sat in full view of the camp, unashamedly painting their bodies with black paste, calling their friends over to help with the more inaccessible regions. The buttocks in particular they found difficult to paint themselves, and rather than waste such an expansive area they would either bend over in front of a friend, or lie across her lap.

The men combined business with pleasure too, usually meeting at the kumamolimo to drink from a steaming bowl of liko. The young bachelors mostly cooked their own simple breakfast here, and together they all discussed the day ahead of them—where they should go to hunt, what they might expect to find. Cephu never came over from his little camp at such times. He merely waited until all the others set off for the hunt, then he joined them.

The men also had to prepare their nets. Helping one another, they uncoiled long lengths of knotted twine, sometimes stretching for three hundred feet, inspecting every section with care. Then, standing upright, the assistant holding the net off the ground, each man coiled his net again so that it hung from one shoulder to within a few inches of his ankle. With a loose length of twine he deftly bound the coils together, gave the net a final shake and hung it from

St Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

whole camp and by making so much noise that all the animals would be frightened away, spoiling the next day's hunting. The Pygmies have a saying that a noisy camp is a hungry camp.

Some misdemeanors are very simply dealt with. A Pygmy thinks nothing of stealing from Negroes; they are, after all, only animals, as seen by Pygmy eyes. But among themselves theft is virtually non-existent. For one thing, they have few possessions, and for another there is no necessity for theft except through laziness.

Pepei was such a lazy Pygmy, and he was always stealing from the Negroes. But out in the forest he was forced to work for his food, to build his own hut if he wanted one (he was a bachelor but liked having his own hut, sharing it with his younger brother), and he had to make his own bows and arrows and hunting net, and to cook his own food. This was hard on Pepei, and although he meant no harm he could not resist slipping around the camp at night, taking a leaf from this hut and a leaf from that, until he had enough to thatch his own hut—which he made by acquiring saplings in a similar manner. Food used to disappear mysteriously, and Pepei had always seen a dog stealing it. But finally he was caught in the act by old Sau, Amaboso's mother, who was a very strange and frightening old lady. Pepei crept into her hut one night and was lifting the lid of a pot when she smacked him hard on the wrist with a wooden pestle. She then grabbed him by the arm, twisting it behind his back, and forced him out into the open.

Nobody really minded Pepei's stealing, because he was a born comic and a great storyteller. But he had gone too far in stealing from old Sau, who had lost her husband and was supported by her son Amaboso and his wife. So the men ran out of their huts angrily and held Pepei, while the youths broke off thorny branches and whipped him until he managed to break away. He went running as fast as he could into the forest; he cried bitterly and wrapped his arms around

583 form, this means that a man must offer his sister for marriage to his intended wife's brother. However, since all families do not contain an even number of boys and girls, this principle may be extended to the larger family group, and a young man may offer a cousin, or an older man a niece, as his exchange partner.

586 Divorce is common and as informal as marriage. Usually it is the woman who makes the initial decision: she simply packs up her belongings and moves out. She will take her children with her and will be considered a member of her own parents' kinship group until she should remarry. This principle is also followed in the case of a widowed woman. A divorced woman's sons will remain with her until they are old enough to go hunting, when they will rejoin their father.

Although the original pair in an exchange marriage may have been drawn to each other by mutual affection, the same is not always the case with the exchange partners, whose union may not be of long duration. The really [583] unpleasant feature of exchange marriage is that if one union breaks up, the complementary marriage must also be dissolved; hence, if one couple cannot tolerate each other they will cause the separation of the other.

• 589 836 Because of the scarcity of women, a certain number of young men are forced to live out a painful bachelorhood for a number of years. Such bachelors usually, if not always, dally with girls whom they cannot marry because of kinship, or with other men's wives, and are a constant cause of trouble. However, if the family group of a boy's father fails to get him a wife, he may, in desperation, appeal to his mother's family group to provide one. If they do, he will go to live with his mother's people, although he is still technically a member of his father's

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[P. 337-A]